

American Apprenticeship Funding Opportunity Announcement Frequently Asked Questions

Updated March 23, 2015

Q. Do applicants have to select an industry or occupation from Appendix A of the Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)?

The list in Appendix A is not exhaustive, and applicants may propose projects focused on industries or occupations that are not listed. However, in order to receive full points in the Statement of Need evaluation criterion (see Section V.A.1.), the project narrative must demonstrate, through the use of labor market information, that the applicant's selected industries/occupations are high growth or in-demand industry(s)/occupation(s) for which employers currently seek H-1B visas. Such evidence may include data from the Department of Labor's Foreign Labor Certification Data Center Web site (http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/performance_data.cfm), or other H-1B data sources as appropriate. In addition, applicants must demonstrate an understanding of the skills, abilities, and degrees/credentials required in the H-1B industries and occupations targeted in the proposal.

Q. Occupations at H-1B skill levels are generally defined as commensurate with a bachelor's degree or comparable experience, education, and training. Are apprenticeships funded under the opportunity limited to training opportunities at the bachelor's degree skill level?

The American Apprenticeship Initiative is not limited to bachelor's degree skill levels and can include the preparation of workers at various points along a career pathway in H-1B industries and/or occupations, where the intent must be for participants to continue their progression along the career pathway towards achieving industry-recognized credentials that lead to middle and high-skilled jobs (see Section I.A. and B. of the Funding Opportunity Announcement). This grant is intended to support employers' efforts to grow a more productive workforce and workers efforts to gain the skills and competencies needed to obtain or upgrade employment in high-growth industries and high-demand occupations along career pathways for industries and occupations that are using H-1B visas.

Updated January 12, 2015

Q. My organization is interested in learning more about the American Apprenticeship Initiative Grant. Will DOL provide a training session or Webinar for potential applicants?

Yes. A link to the pre-recorded Prospective Applicant webinar is available at our apprenticeship homepage (<http://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship>). Or you can link directly to the webinar at <https://www.workforce3one.org/view/3001500851120461666>.

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Q. The approximate funding amount available for the American Apprenticeship Initiative is \$100,000,000. Is the amount of funding available (\$100,000,000) per year for each of the 5 years (60 months) of the grant period? Will successful applicants receive the grant amount requested in their application each year or will this be considered the total grant amount for the 60 month grant period?

As stated in the FOA, Section II. Award Information, the \$100 million is the total amount expected to be available for this funding opportunity. Applicants may between \$2.5 - 5 million total to be expended during the 60 month period of performance; therefore, the funding amount requested by the applicant is for the entire period of performance.

Q. What are the eligibility requirements for participants?

As stated in Section 3. of the FOA, participants must be “at least 16 years of age and not currently enrolled in school within a local secondary educational agency (i.e., high school)” or “at least 18 years of age.” Participants may be U.S. citizens or residents whose visas permit employment within the United States. As stated in Section 2 of the FOA, “[t]he American Apprenticeship Initiative is intended to raise the technical skill levels of American workers so they can obtain or upgrade employment.”

Q. Is the funding under this FOA limited to only those apprenticeships in high-tech occupations that have previously been filled by foreign workers under H-1B visas?

No. It is anticipated that applicants will develop apprenticeship programs for occupations within these industries and occupations for which apprenticeships do not now exist. As stated in Section I.A. Program Purpose, “Grants under this program must focus on helping more employers and workers participate in American Apprenticeships within industries and occupations for which employers are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers such as, Information Technology, and/or other high-growth industries including but not limited to Advanced Manufacturing, Business Services, and Healthcare; and the types of high-demand skill sets (e.g., digital and information technology skills) now required across most industries.” Further, Section III.C of the FOA states “Applicants should review the attached list of industries and occupations...This list is not exhaustive and applicants are advised to also refer to the Foreign Labor Certification Data Center.

Q. Will DOL grant preference to only one Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) application per region? Is each IMCP community limited to selecting one application to receive points? Will each application that meets the requirements of the FOA receive points?

Section V.A.3.v states that points will be awarded based on “the extent to which the applicant identifies...coordination through...other evidence such as designation as a “Manufacturing

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Community” through the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP). (2 points)” All applicants will receive the same consideration for these 2 points.

Q. As stated in the FOA, grant funds cannot be used to pay participant wages. However, can wages be paid by leveraged funds? Can the employer pay the wages? Can eligible participants be hired and trained and receive wages during the 60 month period of performance?

Yes, leveraged resources can pay wages to the extent that these wages confirm to the cost principles at 2 CFR 200 and the funding restrictions in the FOA. Typically, participating employers will pay all or most of an apprentice’s wages. Section II.A says, “This grant investment is intended to offset costs of training and to play a catalytic role in American Apprenticeship expansion, but it will be essential that applicants acquire adequate leveraged resources to accomplish the project’s overall goals and milestones. Public and private leveraged resources must be sufficient to allow all apprentices to successfully complete training.” Also, Section II.A of the FOA says, “Projects must clearly demonstrate the ability and commitment to train significant numbers of new apprentices...commensurate with the grant request.” Also, note Section IV.B.3.c.vi “Each applicant must provide a plan for selecting apprentices in order to meet their enrollment projections within the 60 month period of performance.”

Q. I am a business owner and am interested in the American Apprenticeship Initiative. After reading the eligibility section, it is to my understanding that my business would have to be in a partnership with a public entity in order to be considered, and that the public entity would have to be the lead on the grant application. What steps can I take to partner with a public entity in order for this to become an eligible partnership for funding?

As stated in Section VIII. E. of the FOA, “Applicants and organizations interested in Registered Apprenticeship that would like to potentially connect with other groups or possible partners...are encouraged to visit ...<http://forums.skillsforamericasfuture.org>.” In addition, you can find contact information for your area’s local workforce board at <http://www.servicelocator.org/WorkforceContacts.asp>. Twenty-five states plus the District of Columbia and Guam have recognized State Apprenticeship Agencies. For a full list of USDOL recognized State Apprenticeship Agencies, please visit <http://www.doleta.gov/oa/stateagencies.cfm>.

Q. Are the funds of the grant paid up front or do you have to wait until several months after you started the program before you receive funding? Regarding Indirect costs on p.33 of the FOA, “You have two options to claim reimbursement of indirect costs.” Also, who is a recipient or subrecipient?

The payment method to awarded applications will be specified in the grant agreement. In general, recipients will draw down funds as necessary through the U.S. Health and Human Services Payment Management System web-based portal (http://www.dpm.psc.gov/about_us/about_us.aspx?explorer.event=true). In addition, you

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should review Section VI.B.1 Administrative Program Requirements and review 2 CFR Part 200 for definitions:

- Indirect costs, please see the definition at 2 CFR 200.56
- Recipient, please see the definition at 2 CFR 200.86
- Subrecipient, please see the definition at 2 CFR 200.93

Q. We are considering submitting an application where the lead applicant is a non-profit 501(c)(3) and is a workforce intermediary as described in the FOA. However, the non-profit does not have fiscal administrative capabilities. The fiscal administrator would have to be another organization, in this case, the One Stop operator. Is this arrangement possible where one entity is the applicant, but the fiscal administrator (i.e., the entity that manages the funds, makes payroll, pays sub-contractors, etc.) is another completely different organization?

No. As stated in Section III. B. "Grants will be awarded to a lead applicant within the primary partnership, which will serve as the grantee and have overall fiscal and administrative responsibility for the grant." In addition, this section also states: "The lead applicant must be the organization specified in Section 8 of the SF-242... will be: point of contact with the department...the entity with authority to withdraw or draw down funds through the Department of Health and Human Services - Payment Management System..."

I. Purpose and Goals

Q: What is the overarching objective of the American Apprenticeship Grants (AAG)?

This initiative is intended to provide a catalyst in supporting a uniquely American Apprenticeship system that meets our country's particular economic, industry and workforce needs. Grant projects under AAG must help more employers and workers participate in American Apprenticeships within industries and occupations for which employers are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers.

Q. What key goals will the American Apprenticeship grantees address?

These grants are available for the creation and/or expansion of innovative and sustainable public-private partnerships and project designs that align with regional and state economies to address the following goals:

- Support the expansion of quality and innovative American Apprenticeship programs into high-growth occupation(s) and industry(s), particularly those for which employers are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers, and the related activities necessary to support such programs;

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- Create career pathways that encompass American Apprenticeship and align with other post-secondary educational offerings;
- Use strategies to significantly increase apprenticeship opportunities for job seekers and workers (particularly for women and other underrepresented populations in apprenticeship, including young men and women of color, people with disabilities; low-skilled populations; and veterans, including transitioning service members); and
- Leverage and develop public policies that increase demand for American Apprenticeship and support sustainability.

Q. Does US DOL have goals for the number of apprentices to be served?

Yes. To ensure that grant funds result in services to significant numbers of apprentices, we have established goals for the minimum numbers of apprentices to be served during the period of performance based on the amount of funds requested by the applicant.

**Minimum Goals for Apprentices Served
During the Grant Period Based on Funding Request**

Funding Request	Apprentices Served
\$2,500,000 – \$2,999,999	300
\$3,000,000 – \$4,000,000	600
\$4,000,001 – \$5,000,000	1000

II. Apprenticeship Basics

Q. What are American Apprenticeships (also referred to as Registered Apprenticeships)?

American Apprenticeships are innovative work-based learning and post-secondary earn-and-learn models that meet national standards for registration with the U.S. Department of Labor (or federally recognized State Apprenticeship Agencies).

Q. How is American Apprenticeship different from other types of work-based training?

American Apprenticeship training is distinguished from other types of workplace training by several factors: (1) participants who are newly hired (or already employed) earn wages from employers during training; (2) programs must meet national standards for registration with the U.S. Department of Labor (or federally-recognized State Apprenticeship Agencies; (3) programs provide on-the-job learning and job-related technical instruction; (4) on-the-job learning is conducted in the work setting under the direction of one or more of the employer's personnel; and 5) training results in an industry-recognized credential.

Q. Where can I find technical assistance resources to help me develop and registered my apprenticeship program with US DOL?

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DOL maintains a number of web-based resources that may be of assistance to applicants at <http://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship>. Here you can find our newest technical assistance products including our Quick Start Toolkit, which provides helpful steps and resources to start and register an apprenticeship program as well as our Federal Resources Playbook, which provides information on using the other Federal funds and resources to support your registered apprenticeship program.

Note: Applicants must also commit, on behalf of the partnership, to work with DOL (or DOL-recognized State Apprenticeship Agencies) to register new apprenticeship programs. In states in which they exist, State Apprenticeship Agencies will play an important leadership and supporting role in the regional and state infrastructure to promote, develop, register, and expand apprenticeship programs.

Q. What are the advantages of registering my program with US DOL?

Apprenticeship programs develop highly skilled employees that provide value for their employers. These programs have been shown to:

- reduce turnover rates
- increase productivity by developing custom skill sets
- lower the cost of recruitment
- increase workplace safety
- create a stable pipeline of highly-trained workers

Q. Are all apprenticeship programs registered with US DOL union-based?

No. Registered Apprenticeship is used widely across all industries and sponsors of apprenticeship can include joint labor-management organizations, labor organizations, employers, colleges, industry-associations, government, and the military.

III. Funding Source and Award Information

Q: What is the funding source of this grant program?

These grants are financed by a user fee paid by employers to hire foreign workers into the United States under the H-1B nonimmigrant visa program and are authorized by Section 414(c) of the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998 (ACWIA), as amended (codified at 29 USC 2916a).

Q: What type of industries and occupations can be funded with these H-1B resources?

American Apprenticeship grants will fund projects across a diversity of industries and occupations for which employers are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers. DOL is interested in funding innovative program designs that focus on industries and occupations for

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which employers are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers, such as Information Technology, and/or other high-growth industries including but not limited to Advanced Manufacturing, Business Services, and Healthcare; and the types of high-demand skill sets (e.g., digital and information technology skills) now required across most industries.

Q: What are allowable uses of funds under this grant?

Allowable activities under this grant must help employers grow a more productive workforce and assist workers in gaining the skills and competencies needed to obtain or upgrade employment in high-growth industries and occupations, or along career pathways for such industries and occupations.

Some examples of allowable activities listed in the Funding Opportunity Announcement include support for:

- On-the-Job Learning (OJL)
- Job Related Technical Instruction (RTI)
- Pre-Apprenticeship Training
- Sector strategy and career pathway development activities
- Partnership building activities
- Development of outreach and promotion to support increased awareness of American Apprenticeship for employers, potential participants (particularly underrepresented populations), educators, the general public, etc.

Q. When does the application process close?

The closing date for receipt of applications under this announcement is April 30, 2015.

Q: How much funding will be made available for this grant program?

Approximately \$100 million is expected to be available to fund approximately 25 grants.

Q: How much funding will be awarded through each grant?

Grant awards will range from \$2.5 million - \$5 million. Applicants may not submit a proposal for less than \$2.5 million or greater than \$5 million.

Q. How will the selection of grantees be determined?

Selection of grantees will be determined on the strength of the proposal, partnership, and commitments of leveraged resources, along with other factors, such as the geographic distribution of funds, mix of industries and occupations, partnership structures, scope of innovation, level of expansion (i.e., new apprentice goals), and/or other factors. Applicants must present a comprehensive strategy that is responsive to the Project Narrative requirements in Section IV.

Q: What is the period of performance for grants under the AAG?

The period of performance is 60 months. This performance period includes all necessary implementation and start-up activities. The process for program development and registration

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should begin immediately and apprenticeship enrollments should be expedited, with the expectation of apprentice enrollments to begin in the first 12 months of the grant.

IV. Eligible Applicants

Q: Who can apply for American Apprenticeship Grants?

Grants under this program will be awarded to a **partnership of private and public sector entities**. To be eligible to compete for funding under this solicitation, the applicant must show evidence of a public-private consortium that consists of at least one entity from each of two sectors: 1.) **Private Sector:** A business, a consortium of businesses, a business-related nonprofit organization, a joint labor-management organization, a labor organization, or a private organization functioning as a workforce intermediary for the express purpose of serving the needs of businesses; and 2.) **Public Sector:** At least one representative from one of the following three types of entities: the workforce investment system; public education or training provider; or a DOL-recognized State Apprenticeship Agency.

Q: Who is eligible to serve as the Lead Applicant?

Grants will be awarded to a lead applicant within the primary partnership, which will serve as the grantee and have overall fiscal and administrative responsibility for the grant. A lead applicant must be a public or non-profit organization that meets the definition of one of the types of eligible entities. (See the eligible private and public sector entities above)

There are two exceptions where an entity is eligible to be a part of the primary partnership but not eligible to apply as a lead applicant: 1.) For-profit private business or for-profit consortium of businesses or for-profit business organizations **cannot** be the lead applicant. 2.) For-profit education/training providers **cannot** be the lead applicant.

Q. What if my partnership meets the eligibility requirements for the grant but we don't already have an apprenticeship program registered with US DOL, can we still apply for a grant?

Yes. DOL is interested in funding competitive applications that transform and adapt alternative work-based learning programs or rigorous educationally-based internship models into American Apprenticeship programs; as well as competitive applications to significantly expand existing and successful registered programs.

Q. Can I apply for more than one grant?

Applicants may only submit one application as the lead applicant in response to this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA). Applicants that submit more than one application as the lead applicant will be considered non-responsive, and none of their applications will be considered for funding. While applicants may only submit one application as the lead applicant in response to the FOA, applicants can serve as an eligible entity (non-lead

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applicant) in the primary partnership and/or as an optional partner in more than one application in response to this FOA.

V. Employer Commitment, Partnership Engagement, & Leveraged Resources

Q. As we develop our partnership, how many employers must be involved?

Applications must include significant employer engagement, including a minimum of three employer partners with demonstrated engagement. Applicants must also describe any regional or national industry associations that are actively participating in the project.

Q. What are the expectations for scope of partnerships?

DOL is interested in projects that demonstrate a broad range of required and optional partners, (described in Section III.A. of the FOA) to create the conditions that support the FOA's goal to significantly expand American Apprenticeship opportunities.

Q. Is there an expectation that applicants secure other leveraged resources to support the project?

Yes. This grant investment is intended to offset costs of training and to play a catalytic role in American Apprenticeship expansion, but it will be essential that applicants acquire adequate leveraged resources to accomplish the project's overall goals and milestones. Public and private leveraged resources must be sufficient to allow all apprentices to successfully complete training.

VI. Eligible Participants

Q: Who is eligible to receive training under the American Apprenticeship grants?

Participants served through the project can be either: a) youth that are at least 16 years of age and not currently enrolled in school within a local secondary educational agency (i.e., high school) or, b) at least 18 years of age.

Additionally, one of the key goals of the AAG is to open up access to apprenticeship opportunities for underrepresented populations. Projects should demonstrate strategies to employ and train underserved populations in apprenticeship such as women, young men and women of color, persons with disabilities, low-skilled populations, veterans, including transitioning service members, and others.